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ABSTRACT

Intended to provide a paradigm for teachers planning a course in science fiction film, the instructional approach outlined in this paper examines films in relation to each other and to culture. The paper provides a course outline, a discussion of lecture topics, a suggested reading list, and a film list. The instructional approach suggested by the paper is divided into three parts--the first third of the course approaches the film genre from a theoretical perspective sufficiently broad to introduce any film genre course, so that as a module it could be "plugged into" alternative studies of the Western, horror film, et cetera. The second and concluding segments of the course focus on the science fiction film by examining, respectively, its formal properties and representative themes. The paper includes 27 notes. (NKA)

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Teaching Science Fiction Film Genre:

Theory, Form, and Theme

by Lane Roth

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Departments of English are now teaching more university film courses than any other academic department, according to 1980 survey research findings.[1] The same source estimates that English departments teach more than ninety percent of science fiction literature courses.[2] A model course for the teaching of literature and film, which appeared in the *Journal of English Teaching Techniques* in 1976, intentionally deleted the study of popular genres.[3] Yet film genre has pedagogical value because, as Edward Buscombe asserts, it "offers one of the richest sources of material for those teaching Liberal Studies to the culturally unsophisticated."[4] In recent years the phenomenal popularity of *Star Wars* and its successors has demonstrated a robust revival of the genre movie, especially the science fiction film. An English course combining the separate appeals of science fiction and film may arguably elicit high student interest and be a welcome addition to the curriculum.

This paper is intended to provide a paradigm for teachers planning a course in science fiction film. Rather than comparing films with their literary sources or with (as is increasingly the case) their subsequent novelizations, this course examines films in relation to each other and to culture. In addition to a course outline and discussion of lecture topics, a suggested reading list and filmography will be offered.

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Course Structure and Objectives

The first third of the course approaches film genre from a theoretical perspective sufficiently broad to introduce any film genre course, so that as a module it can be "plugged into" alternative studies of the Western, horror film, etc.

The second and concluding segments of the course focus on the science fiction film by examining, respectively, its formal properties and representative themes. The purpose of the course is "to explore the relationship between the system of (film) and the culture of which it is a part"' here "film" has replaced "literature" in Robert Scholes' definition of literary structuralism.[5]

Genre Theory

The nexus between film and culture obtains from the concept of genre. Film genre is defined as a classificatory system (abstract concept) which facilitates understanding of individual films (concrete manifestations) by organizing them into types of film distinguished by common, recognizable visual and thematic content. The relevance of conventional film genre categories inheres, as Andrew Tudor has suggested, not in their use as arbitrary, critically convenient tools, but in their function as shared cultural meanings.[6] I. C. Jarvie's perception that "what can be said critically about popular taste and the mass media, is...that the *audience* tends to concentrate on one *genre* or the other,"[7] can be demonstrated empirically in the classroom, where discussion reveals typically that students tend to conceptualize films by genre classification.

The teacher of film genre will understand that the relationship of individual creativity to genre tradition need not be antagonistic. We are reminded by

Frank D. McConnell that to approach film genres as mere "back-drops for the flaring-forth of individual creative genius" is to be guided by assumptions peculiar to post-romantic literary and art criticism.[8]

The genre approach provides contextualization for films by viewing them as formulaic, film-factory products created to provide tacit, commercial guarantees for audiences as well as filmmakers. The collaborative and commercial nature of cinema extends beyond the creation of products to their distribution and exhibition to a mass audience. While all film releases require promotional campaigns, the visual content of the science fiction genre is particularly amenable to exploitation like merchandising tie-ins.

Traditionally this has applied to "art" films like *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968) as it has to movies like *The Green Slime* (also 1968). In today's marketing mix, following the phenomenal success of merchandising tie-ins from *Star Wars* (1977) and *Superman* (1978), even the high-budget, prestige picture "itself becomes almost superfluous.... What you have instead is an event...geared to the sale of all manner of consumer goods."[9]

The often flamboyant quality of science fiction promotion can be demonstrated to students by reading aloud, or showing slides made, from pressbooks, the brochures supplied to theatrical exhibitors by distributors via National Screen Service. Recent pressbooks may be obtained from cooperative managers of local movie theatres whereas older pressbooks, now considered collector's items, are available for purchase at film memorabilia shops and fan conventions.

The contextual perspective of film genre has led Thomas Schatz to "suggest that it is the high degree of audience familiarity with these cinematic forms and hence the active but indirect audience participation in the creation of genre films which provides the basis for whatever claims might be made regarding the mythic function of the genre film as cultural ritual."[10] Schatz's thesis can be developed by referring to definitions of myth advanced by Northrop Frye and Claude Levi-Strauss. Frye calls myth "the union of ritual and dream," because it includes cyclical, recurrent narration as well as a dialectic between desire and reality.[11] Whereas Frye wrote about verbal communication and movies communicate nonverbally as well as verbally, class discussion can confirm that the iterative, "escapist" genre film is both ritualistic and dreamlike. The genre film's repetitive quality is essential to myth, whose general purpose, according to Levi-Strauss, "is to provide a logical model capable of overcoming a contradiction."[12]

Congruently, the genre film is seen by Thomas Sobchack "as a way in which the tension of culture and social paradoxes inherent in human experience can be resolved."[13] In particular, Sobchack perceives a duality between the Apollonian drive toward self-individuation vs. the Dionysian drive toward group conformity, as outlined in Nietzsche's *Birth and Death of Tragedy*. The genre film, according to Sobchack, "is a paradigm of ritual and order," because it conventionally resolves this conflict in favor of group values."[14] The more explicit role of genre film in communicating political ideology is examined by Judith Hess, who contends that genre films "serve the interests of the ruling class by assisting in the maintenance of the status quo."[15] Contradistinctively,

Jean-Loup Bourget detects in genre film a dialectic between explicit meaning, deriving from the script, and implicit meaning communicated directly by the film's visual and aural elements. Through this "implicit sub-text of genre films," Bourget concludes, Hollywood film directors have been free to question critically the operation or breakdown of social structures like American society and the Hollywood system itself.[16]

Exploring the interrelationships of genre films, myth and ideology is intended to stimulate students to re-evaluate familiar genre films in a new context. Most of the sources here cited--McConnell, Tudor, Buscombe, Sobchack, Hess, and Bourget--are found in *Film Genre: Theory and Practice*, edited by Barry Grant. Assigned readings from this anthology will serve as discussion material about film genre theory. A film relevant to this introductory segment of the course is *Roger Corman, Hollywood's Wild Angel*, an individual who has worked successfully in a variety of Hollywood genres.

Science Fiction Film Form

The second unit of the course explores the sensory surface of science fiction film. Assigned readings from Douglas Menville and R. Reginald's *Things to Come: An Illustrated History of the Science Fiction Film* provide an overview of the genre within which individual works can be located. The diachronic approach of the text complements the synchronic approach of lecture and discussion, and the abundant photographs offer visual source material for class discussion, papers, or exams.

This may be a propitious time to clarify course objectives to students, many of whom may have firm preconceptions about science, or science fiction

literature. Some class members may vocalize vigorously their expectations that the films conform faithfully to contemporary scientific "facts" or, if applicable, to literary pretexts. Encouraging students to suspend such normative prescriptions and to accept cinematic liberties like rocket flames in the vacuum of space or deviations from original storylines will help promote the understanding of science fiction film as *film*.

Adapting the distinction between "inner and outer" forms found in Wellek and Warren's treatment of genre in their *Theory of Literature*, Edward Buscombe argues for the primacy of outer forms in film genre, so that "the major defining characteristics of genres will be visual."[17] Exemplary is the science fiction film which, according to John Baxter, is "basically a sensuous medium."[18]

An assumption of this course is the literary structuralist premise that "content and form are inseparable and cannot exist without the other."[19] The science fiction film can be defined essentially through its visual codes or formal rules. Genre classifications are based on "subject matter" in the sense of how a film looks and sounds, rather than narrative content.[20] A most recent example is *Battle Beyond the Stars* (1980), which retells the story of the Western *The Magnificent Seven* (1960), which is itself an adaptation of the Japanese film *The Seven Samurai* (1954).[21] Yet *Battle Beyond the Stars* is clearly science fiction, because it is "about" aliens (exotic make-up and costumes) and spaceships (fantastic sets and props). Similarly, students will consider *Star Wars* as the epitome of science fiction, even though its plot follows the paradigm of the classical monomyth as described by Joseph Campbell in *The Hero With a Thousand Faces*.[22]

The repeated use of these visual codes, with minimal variance within and between films, constitutes the iconography of the science fiction film. Sobchack explains that "these visual elements have become encrusted with shared meanings," and so operate as visual analogs to the epithet in epic poems.[23] An entertaining pedagogical approach to defamiliarizing these visual conventions is to show a parody of the genre, perhaps Woody Allen's *Sleeper* (1973) or the award winning short film, *Hardware Wars* (1978). Similarly instructive are occasional films that combine genres by mixing visual codes: *Westworld* (1973, science fiction-Western), The Italian *Planet of the Vampires* (1965, science fiction-horror) and *Just Imagine* (1930, science fiction-musical-farce). They can stimulate discussion by representing special problems in intertextuality.

The visual surface of film extends beyond the people and things recorded by the camera. Little has been written, unfortunately, about the correlation of purely cinematic codes--camera angle, image size, camera movement, and montage--with particular film genres. More research is clearly needed.

One identifiable convention common, but not restricted, to science fiction films is the purely cinematic art of special photographic effects. While this is a technical subject of sufficient complexity to remain outside the purview of this course, students will recognize that special effects are an integral component of the genre and represent an evolving "state of the art" technology. This development can be traced from the 1902 fanciful French short *A Trip to the Moon*, through the 1929 German feature *Woman in the Moon*, advised by rocket experts, through the George Pal productions of 1950's (*Destination Moon*, 1950; *When Worlds Collide*, 1951; *War of the Worlds*, 1953), to today's films. Some of

the modern processes are explained in the 1977 CBS-TV documentary *The Making of Star Wars*. Primarily the students should understand that special effects are a costly, time-consuming aspect of creation demanding a studio system with its multiplicity of specialized roles. Special effects dictate that the science fiction film be *par excellence* commercial collaborative cinema.

Whereas visual codes determine genre in silent film, they are necessary, but not sufficient, to explain the sound film. Aural codes have been neglected by the literature about science fiction film. This lack of attention is undue, considering that of the quintuple material of expression in cinema identified by semiologist Christian Metz--moving photographic images, writing (titles, credits, etc.), spoken words, music, and sound effects--three involve the soundtrack.[24] No particular type of music or dialog, either by content or delivery, seems exclusive to the genre, but the quality of sound effects is unique in the science fiction film. Unlike other genres, it makes extensive use of "artificial sound," what Rod Whitaker defines as having "no identifiable source outside the cosmos of film...[being] produced electronically or through the mixing of natural sounds (reversed, sped up, slowed down, etc.) to make an unnatural one."[25] Students will recognize that modern electronic equipment emits little or no sound, yet the more advanced technology depicted in science fiction film is unnecessarily noisy. This can be demonstrated in class by playing excerpts from *Forbidden Planet* (1956) in the dark, without engaging the projection lamp, and asking students to listen to the soundtrack and record what they visualize. The images they report from this exercise can be compared to those observed in the film at the complete screening the next class meeting.

Recurring Themes

The concluding third of the course is an analysis of recurrent themes in science fiction film. A brief overview is provided by the half-hour CBS-TV documentary *Stranger Than Science Fiction*. Narrated by Walter Cronkite, it includes film clips from many science fiction classics including the German silent, *Metropolis* (1927), the British *Things to Come* (1936), and the American *Rocketship X-M* (1950), *War of the Worlds* (1953), and *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968). Also teaching through extracts is *The Science Fiction Film*, which includes one-half hour of film excerpts from *War of the Worlds* and *The Day the Earth Stood Still* (1951), with accompanying audiocassette lectures by Professor Stuart Kaminsky.

Recurring ideas in science fiction films include the journey of self-discovery and the challenge of foreign invasion. Exemplary films like *Forbidden Planet* and *The Thing* (1951) have been interpreted psychoanalytically by Margaret Tarratt.[26] These themes can be observed, however, in other genres like the Western, war film, horror film, and period swashbuckler.[27]

Thematically specific to the science fiction film is its preoccupation with unresolved cultural tensions about technology, so much that the master antinomy of the genre may be stated as man vs. machine, or more broadly, nature vs. artifact. This dialectic has been expressed most often in the science fiction film through the motifs of the dystopia, the robot, and the Bomb.

The idea of utopia can serve as a stimulus for class discussion about the underlying assumptions of a rational society based on order and technology. Readings from Dostoevsky's *Notes from Underground*, which advocates

individual freedom of choice to revolt spitefully, will present students with a provocatively contrasting point of view.[28]

Despite their rich literary tradition, utopias occur rarely in science fiction film.[29] Distinctly dystopian visions of the future predominate, as in the French *Alphaville* (1965) and *Fahrenheit 451* (1966); the American *THX 1138* (1971), *Zardoz* (1974), and *Logan's Run* (1976); the German *Metropolis* (1927); and the British *1984* (1956). These films all require some variation of Dostoevsky's "underground man" to defy the prevailing order.

Metropolis is particularly amenable to structural analysis because of its enunciated polarities of "head" (despotic ruler) vs. "hands" (oppressed workers). The Levi-Straussian concept of mythical thought working "from the awareness of oppositions toward their progressive mediation" is evident through the ultimate reconciliation of "hands" and "head" through "the heart" (the ruler's son who saves the workers' children).[30]

Paranoid projections of technology have analogs on the individual level. Sophisticated computers like HAL 9000 in *2001: A Space Odyssey* and Proteus in *The Demon Seed* (1977) become deadly menaces when they go haywire and assume very human proclivities toward violence or sex. More often, artificial intelligence appears as an ambulatory, anthropomorphic robot. The robotrix in *Metropolis* is a synecdoche for the film's overall condemnation of machines as corruptive and dehumanizing. My analysis of the lighting codes that signify this theme in *Metropolis* appears elsewhere.[31]

Traditionally the science fiction film has imputed to the robot the role of Doppelganger or psychic double, to which we project our own dangerous,

denied impulses. A reading assignment from Otto Rank's psychoanalytic study *The Double* will afford students a theoretical framework they can apply to the portrayal of robots in the animated cartoon *Techno-Cracked* (1933) and feature films like *Metropolis*, *The Day The Earth Stood Still*, *Forbidden Planet* (1956), *Battlestar Galactica* (1978), *The Black Hole* (1979), and *Saturn 3* (1980).[30]

Star Wars has replaced these typical technological terrors with its lovable robotic pair, C-3PO and R2-D2. Their comic treatment and behavior constitute reversals of comedic sensibilities defined by Henri Bergson.[33] Whereas Bergson saw humor in humans behaving mechanically, the *Star Wars* "droids" are risible because they are machines who behave as humans.[34]

Finally, fear of technology has been emblematized by the Bomb. This applies conspicuously to science fiction films of the 1950's and early 1960's, when resurrection of long-dormant primordial beasts and fiendish mutation of people, animals and plants all represented nightmarish manifestations of international anxiety about nuclear testing. The ritual destruction so integral to these films has led Susan Sontag to infer that the entire genre is "concerned with the aesthetics of destruction."[35] That science and technology, which were blamed for these imagined threats, also provided the means of their elimination and human salvation, expresses an unresolved cultural paradox of that period. Representative of these films are the American *Beast from 20,000 Fathoms* (1953) and *Them* (1954), the Japanese *Godzilla* (1954), and the British *Giant Behemoth* (1959).

Science Fiction Film Genre: A Sample Syllabus

I. Film Genre Theory

1. Introduction
2. Lecture: Definition of Film Genre. Reading: Stuart M. Kaminsky, *American Film Genres*, Ch. 1; Frank D. McConnell, "Leopards and History: The Problem of Film Genre"' Andrew Tudor, "Genre."
3. Lecture: The Genre Film as Media Event. Demonstration of Promotional Tie-ins.
4. Discussion: Film Genre Aesthetics. Reading: Edward Buscombe, "The Idea of Genre in the American Cinema"; Thomas Sobchack, "Genre Film: A Classical Experience."
5. Discussion: Film Genre, Ideology, and Myth. Reading: Judith Hess, "Genre Film and the Status Quo"; Jean-Loup Bourget, "Social Implications in the Hollywood Genres."
6. Film: *Roger Corman, Hollywood's Wild Angel* (1978).
7. Examination.

II. Science Fiction Film Form

8. Film: *Sleeper* (1973).
9. Discussion: Iconography. Reading: Menville and Reginald, Ch. 1.
10. Discussion: Intertextuality. Film: *Westworld* excerpts for analysis. Reading: Menville and Reginald, Ch. 2.

11. Film: *Westworld* (1973).

12. Film: *A Trip to the Moon* (1902); *Woman in the Moon* (1929). Reading: Menville and Reginald, Ch. 3.

13. Film: *The Making of Star Wars* (1977). Reading: Menville and Reginald, Ch. 4.

14. Lecture: Science Fiction Music and Sound Effects. Analysis of Soundtrack: *Forbidden Planet* excerpts.

15. Film: *Forbidden Planet* (1956). Reading: Menville and Reginald, Ch. 5.

16. Lecture: Review of Science Fiction Film History.

17. Examination.

III. Science Fiction Film Themes

18. Film: *Stranger Than Science Fiction*.

19. Film with Audio Tape Lecture: *The Science Fiction Film*.

20. Reading: Margaret Tarratt, "Monsters from the Id."

21. Film: *Metropolis* (1927).

22. Discussion: Utopia, Dystopia, and the Underground Man. Reading: Dostoevsky, "Notes from Underground."

23. Film: *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968).

24. Discussion: Artificial Intelligence and the Robot. Reading: Otto Rank, *The Double*, Ch. 5. Henri Bergson, "Laughter." Film: *Techno-Cracked* (1933).

25. Film: *The Beast From 20,000 Fathoms* (1953).

26. Discussion: The Bomb. Reading: Susan Sontag, "The Imagination of Disaster."

27. Examination.

28. Debriefing and evaluation.

Resource Data

Scheduling. The syllabus is designed for two class meetings per week, so that feature films can be screened in one uninterrupted, two-hour period. The second class meeting can be scheduled for one hour or two hours, the longer session allowing advantageously more time for lecture and discussion.

Costs. The continually increasing costs of nontheatrical film rentals, typically at rates unmatched by limited course funding, is a challenge to the instructor. Students can be assessed a lab fee to defray a portion of the considerably larger film rentals.

In the absence of a film programmer or campus media center, the actual booking of films may be the responsibility of the individual instructor. Comparison shopping, by perusing the catalogs of various film distributors, is financially rewarding, albeit very time consuming. The *Film Programmer's Guide to 16mm Rentals*, ed. Kathleen Weaver, 3rd ed. (Albany, Calif.: Reel Research, 1980) is a helpful reference. Its price quotations cannot, of course, reflect up-to-the-minute changes in inventories (as when distribution rights are transferred from one distributor to another, usually with an accompanying rental increase) or rental fees. Charges for postage are handling are also excluded. This information, along with available playdates, is best obtained from telephone contact with the distributors themselves. The cost of long-distance phone calls can be easily recovered by the instructor's ability to negotiate package deals,

resulting in lower unit costs, especially at classroom rates involving no admission charge at screenings.

Other sources of film programming should be investigated. The campus or city library, or a local buff with a personal collection, may lend films for classroom use. The student center or another department running a film series may be willing to share films and expenses. Finally, videocassette recordings can be purchased, often at a fraction of the rental and shipping cost for one playdate. In this way, even the initial, high investment of a videocassette recorder and TV monitor can be compensated over time.

Film list. Films indicated in the sample syllabus are listed below, with their directors and original theatrical release dates. Corresponding distributors and Fall 1980 rentals are provided. Where more than one distributor rents a film, the most economical source is given.

Roger Corman, Hollywood's Wild Angel (Christian Blackwood compilation, 1978). Blackwood Productions, 251 West 57 St., New York, NY 10019. Phone: 212/247-4710. Rental: $75.

Sleeper (Woody Allen, 1973). United Artists 16, 729 Seventh Ave., New York, NY 10019. Toll-free phone: 800/223-0933. Rental: $300.

Westworld (Michael Crichton, 1973). Films, Inc., 733 Greenbay Road, Wilmette, IL 60091. Toll-free phone: 800/323-1406. Rental: $210.

A Trip to the Moon (George Melies short, 1902). Kit Parker Films, Carmel Valley, CA 93924. Toll-free phone: 800/538-5838. Rental $7.50.

Woman in the Moon (Fritz Lang, 1929). Kit Parker. Rental: $35.

The Making of Star Wars (CBS-TV compilation, 1977). Films Inc. Rental: $175.

Forbidden Planet (Fred Wilcox, 1956). Films Inc. Rental: $125.

Stranger Than Science Fiction (CBS-TV compilation, 1969). CRM McGraw Hill Films, 110 15th St., Delmar, CA 92014. Phone: 714/453-5000. Rental: $27.

Metropolis (Fritz Lang, 1927). Kit Parker. Rental: $35.

2001: A Space Odyssey (Stanley Kubrick, 1968). Films Inc. Rental: Discuss with distributor sales rep.

Techno-Cracked (Ub Iwerks cartoon, 1933). Kit Parker. Rental: $7.50.

The Beast from 20,000 Fathoms (Eugene Lourie, 1963). Audio Brandon Films, 2512 Program Drive, Dallas, TX 75220. Toll-free phone, from outside Texas: 800/527-3054; from within Texas: 800/492-9428.

Reading List. The following two books are recommended for purchase by students.

(1) Grant, Barry, ed. *Film Genre: Theory and Criticism*. Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow, 1977. This anthology contains the articles indicated in the syllabus by McConnell, Tudor, Buscombe, Sobchack, Hess, Bourget, and Tarratt.

(2) Menville, Douglas, and Reginald R. *Things to Come: An Illustrated History of the Science Fiction Film*. New York: Times Books-Quadrangle/New York Times, 1977.

The following seven books may be put on reserve for assigned reading:

(1) Bergson, Henri. "Laughter." In *Comedy*. Ed. Wylie Sypher. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday Anchor, 1956, pp. 60-190.

(2) Dostoevsky, Fyodor. "Notes from Underground." In *Existentialism from Dostoevsky to Sartre*. Ed. Walter Kaufman. Rev. and expanded ed. New York: Meridian-New American Library, 1975, Ch. 2.

(3) Kaminsky, Stuart M. *American Film Genres: Approaches to a Critical Theory of Popular Film*. New York: Laurel-Dell, 1977, Ch. 1.

(4) Parish, James Robert, and Pitts, Michael R. *The Great Science Fiction Pictures*. Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow, 1977. This illustrated reference provides story summaries and critical commentaries, and identifies casts and credits, for hundreds of science fiction films.

(5) Rank, Otto. *The Double: A Psychoanalytic Study*. Trans. and ed. Harry Tucker, Jr. 1971, rpt. New York: Meridian-New American Library, 1979, Ch. 5.

(6) Sontag, Susan. "The Imagination of Disaster." In her *Against Interpretation*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1961, pp. 209-225.

(7) Whitaker, Rod. "Audio Content." In his *The Language of Film*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1970, Ch. 4.

NOTES

[1]Mark Gordon and Jack Nachbar, eds., *Currents of Warm Life: Popular Culture in American Higher Education* (Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1980), p. 21. According to Table 6, "Number and Typology of Courses, with Breakdowns by Department," of 327 film courses taught in

campuses surveyed, English departments teach 84; the next-highest ranking department is Speech Communication, accounting for 68 of the courses offered. This information was provided by telephone interview with Rebecca Peters, of the Popular Culture Dept. staff, on 3 October 1980.

[2]English departments teach 102 of the 112 science fiction literature courses reported.

[3]Richard Dozier and Leland Thiel, "A Model Course in Literature and Film," *Journal of English Teaching Techniques*, 9, No. 3 (1976), 31-35.

[4]Edward Buscombe, "The Idea of Genre in the American Cinema," *Screen*, 11, No. 2 (March-Apr. 1970), 196-204; rpt. in *Film Genre: Theory and Criticism* ed. Barry Grant (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow, 1977), p. 35. Further references to this collection will be cited as: *Film Genre*.

[5]Robert Scholes, *Structuralism in Literature: An Introduction* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1974), p. 11.

[6]Andrew Tudor, "Genre," in his *Theories of Film* (New York: Viking, 1973), pp. 131-150; rpt. in *Film Genre*, p. 19.

[7]I. C. Jarvie, *Movies and Society* (New York: Basic Books, 1970), p. 223. Original italics.

[8]Frank D. McConnell, "Leopards and History: The Problem of Film Genre," in *The Spoken Seen: Film and the Romantic Imagination* (Baltimore: John Hopkins Univ. Press, 1975), pp. 118-126; rpt. in *Film Genre*, p. 11.

[9]Kenneth Turan, "Superman! Supersell!", *American Film*, Dec.-Jan. 1979, p. 49.

[10]Thomas Gerard Schatz, "Hollywood Film Genre as Ritual: A Theoretical and Methodological Inquiry." *DAI*, 37 (1977), 7374A (Univ. of Iowa).

[11]Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1956), p. 106; see also pp. 104-112.

[12]Claude Levi-Strauss, "The Structural Study of Myth," *Journal of American Folklore*, 68 (1955), 443.

[13]Thomas Sobchack, "Genre Film: A Classical Experience," *Literature/Film Quarterly*, 3 (1975), 196-204; rpt. in *Film Genre*, p. 47.

[14]Sobchack, p. 51.

[15]Judith Hess, "Genre Films and the Status Quo," *Jump Cut*, No. 1 (May-June 1974), pp. 1, 16, 18; rpt. in *Film Genre*, p. 54.

[16]Jean-Loup Bourget, "Social Implications in the Hollywood Genres," *Journal of Modern Literature*, 3 (173), 191-200; rpt. in *Film Genre*, p. 70.

[17]Buscombe, p. 32.

[18]John Baxter, *Science Fiction in the Cinema* (New York: Paperback Library, 1970), p. 13.

[19]Scholes, p. 80.

[20]Edward S. Small criticizes classification based on "subject matter," and recommends instead a taxonomy based on "structural" distinctions. See his argument in: Edward S. Small, "Literary and Film Genres: Toward a Taxonomy of Film," *Literature/Film Quarterly*, 7 (1979), 290-299. Small's taxonomy can be compatible with traditional genre classification. There are examples of the science fiction film--as defined by formal rules in my discussion--for each of Small's five suggested categories: the fictive feature--*Star Wars*; the experimental film--*Hardware Wars* (1978) or *La Jetee* (1962); the cartoon--*Techno-Cracked* (1933); the actuality--*The Making of Star Wars*; the TV

commercial--Burger King's summer 1980 "spot" advertising *The Empire Strikes Back* drinking glasses, showing excerpts from the film.

[21]The *homage* nature of *Battle Beyond the Stars* can be detected in such puns as naming the alien planet "Akir" and its inhabitants "Akira," as in Akira Kurosawa, the director of *The Seven Samurai*.

[22]Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, 2nd ed., Bollingen Series, 17 (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1972). The correspondence of *Star Wars* to the monomythic pattern described in Campbell is treated in: Andrew Gordon, "*Star Wars*: A Myth for Our Time," *Literature/Film Quarterly*, 6 (1978), 314-326.

[23]Sobchack, p. 44.

[24]Christian Metz [interviewed by Raymond Ballour], "Entretien sur la semiologie du cinema," *Semiotica*, 4, No. 1 (1971), p. 17. My translation.

[25]Rod Whitaker, *The Language of Film* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1970), p. 110.

[26]Margaret Tarratt, "Monsters from the Id," *Films and Filming*, 17, No. 3 (Dec. 1970), 38-42, and No. 4 (Jan. 1971), 40-42; rpt. in *Film Genre*, pp. 161-181.

[27]The science fiction film is treated as a mere extension of the horror film in two major studies of film genre. See: Stuart M. Kaminsky, *American Film Genres: Approaches to a Critical Theory of Popular Film* (New York: Laurel-Dell, 1977), Ch. 7. See also: Stanley J. Solomon, *Beyond Formula: American Film Genres* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976), Ch. 3.

[28]Fyodor Dostoevsky, "Notes from Underground," in *Existentialism from Dostoevsky to Sartre*, ed. Walter Kaufman, revised and expanded ed. (New York: Meridian-New American Library, 1975), Ch. 2.

[29]A noted exception is the British *Things to Come* (1936). Written by H. G. Wells, its screenplay is a polemic for "law and sanity" through technocracy.

[30]Levi-Strauss, p. 440.

[31]Lane Roth, "*Metropolis*, The Lights Fantastic: Semiotic Analysis of Lighting Codes in Relation to Character and Theme," *Literature/Film Quarterly*, 6 (1978), 342-346.

[32]Otto Rank, *The Double: A Psychoanalytic Study*, trans. and ed. Harry Tucker, Jr. (1971; rpt. New York: Meridian-New American Library, 1979). See Ch. 5 in particular.

[33]Henri Bergson, "Laughter," in *Comedy*, ed. Wylie Sypher (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday Anchor, 1956), pp. 60-190.

[34]For an elaboration of this, see: Lane Roth, "Bergsonian Comedy and the Human Machines in *Star Wars*," *Film Criticism*, 4, No. 2 (1980), 1-8.

[35]Susan Sontag, "The Imagination of Disaster," in her *Against Interpretation* (New York: Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux, 1961), p. 213.